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EUROPE'S POISONOUS REMEDIES

EUROPE is suffering from overdoses of patent medicines.

The blood stream of Europe was poisoned by the Congress of Vienna, 1814-15. Then, as in 1918, there had been devastating wars, at that time twenty years of them. Driven by various forces—the rising tides of liberty, of nationality, of fears—disturbed by Napoleon's careless handling of rulers and by certain democratic developments, especially in America, the arbitrary rulers of that day—Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and Austria—formed unto themselves a Council, and cemented their bond of union by the Treaty of Chaumont, March 10, 1814. Three months later they planned, in the First Treaty of Paris, for the general Congress of Vienna.

This congress was called, in sonorous phrases, to re-establish the balance of power, to achieve a general disarmament, to end the slave trade, to fashion a league to enforce peace. Meeting in September, 1814, it was not wholly unlike the Peace Conference meeting in Paris late in December, 1918. It had its shrewd liberal mystic, "the dream prince," flushed by recent victories and backed by a powerful nation, in that case Czar Alexander I, occupying the center of the picture. There were three other powerful personalities—Metternich of Austria, Talleyrand of France, and Castlereagh of England.

There were many powers represented, but the situation was dominated, sometimes by the "big four," sometimes by the "big three," and sometimes by the "big one." The big fellows went deliberately at the business of carving up Europe. There were "special committees." There were barter and intrigue, a scrambling for territory and power, the peoples the while being treated as pawns merely. The congress had its offending nation to deal with, at that time France. Under the terms of the Second Treaty of Paris, November, 1815, France was obliged to restore the art treasures pilfered by Napoleon, to pay an indemnity of 700,000,000 francs, to turn her fortresses over to foreign troops for a definite period of years, and to give up wide strips of territory.

Called in high hopes and heralded by the most pious of phrases, it ended in demands for State rights and isolation; in Prussian demands for a buffer State as a protection against France; in a division of spoils and loot; in a new spirit of nationalism, as in Belgium, Greece, South America; in the rise of a new balance of power, the Concert of Europe—France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia—England operating from the outside only. The Italians wholly outside until the Crimean War. There followed an industrial revolution, many economic and political reforms, typified by the English Reform Act of 1832.

By renewing the Treaty of Chaumont, the quadruple alliance became a "league to enforce peace," the Concert of Europe watching principally over the Balkans. Metternich, convoking his congresses, was, in a sense, the "big man" of his day. The "league" of that time, under the influence of this powerful European, called the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, of Troppau in 1820, of Laibach in 1821, and of Verona in 1822. When confronted in that day with a league to enforce peace, there were men who saw the fallacy of any such method of perpetuating peace. When, under the protocol of Troppau, in November, 1820, it was proposed to set up a military league to control international and external strifes of nations, the very wise Castlereagh of Great Britain replied that Great Britain could never agree to a principle "which she would not in any circumstances allow to be applied in her own case." France refused to sign the protocol.

Not unmindful perhaps because of the constitutional powers emerging and of the democratic ideals becoming vocal, the all-powerful Metternich convinced himself that peace, especially for Austria, rested upon a benevolent oligarchy. But the league to enforce peace as proposed at Troppau was too much for the stomach of Europe. The proposal marked the beginning of the end of the quadruple alliance. European statesmen were beginning to acquaint themselves with the statesmanship of certain gentlemen—James Madison, Oliver Ellsworth, Alexander Hamilton—all of whom, faced with a very concrete international situation, had seen in far-away America the folly of any league to enforce peace.

But there were statesmen who had not acquainted themselves with the all-important work in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787. Alexander I of Russia was one of these. Because of this man's efforts there was organized, under the terms of a treaty, November 20, 1815, what historians have euphemistically called the Holy Alliance. This charter, based upon religious verbiage, vague and general engagements, lasted for seven years, England the while refusing to assent. In some ways the quadruple alliance of that time was a sort of "Supreme Council" plus a "Council of Ambassadors," while the Holy Alliance, called by Castlereagh "a peace of sublime mysticism and nonsense," was in fact a league of nations.

The results of these attempts at international organization, naturally, were not happy. To be sure, under the "Concert" there was something of a European peace. Indeed, in 1851 there was held in London a world-proclaimed peace exhibition.

But Europe was sitting on a volcano. Evidences of this fact developed rapidly. Because of a revolution in

Vienna in 1848, Metternich was overthrown. Revolutions extended elsewhere—in France, in Germany. In 1849 Europeans landed in America at the rate of 1,000 a day. A series of wars began with the Crimean struggle in 1853,—Balkan, Chinese, French-Austrian, Italian, Moor-Spanish, American Civil, French-Mexican, Prussian-Danish, Prussian-Austrian, French-Prussian, Russian-Turkish, *et ad nauseum*. Other crises followed upon each other with increasing danger—in Egypt, at Fashoda, in 1898; in Morocco in 1905; in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1909; in Agadir in 1911. Then came the Turkish-Italian war in 1911, followed by the two Balkan wars in 1912-13. Then, 1914. The Congress of Vienna and the Holy Alliance proved to be poisonous remedies.

Besides alliances, leagues, and concerts, Europe has suffered from a division of alliances.

In 1879 Germany and Austria formed an alliance by the terms of a treaty which was not published until 1888. In the meantime—in 1883, to be exact—Italy was admitted. Offsetting this Triple Alliance, France and Russia signed a treaty of alliance in 1891, to be joined later by England, now known as the Triple Entente. This balancing of power between the Alliance and the Entente, as in the case of the quadruple alliance of 1815, maintained a kind of peace for a quarter of a century; but Europe, as we now know, had simply moved from one volcano to another. When the explosion came it was called the World War.

Evidently unmindful of the fate of previous leagues to enforce peace, men in Paris developed a psychology similar to that of Alexander I of a hundred years before. Once again the big powers proposed to organize themselves for the control of the small. Once again it was proposed to set up a small group of men from the powerful States with the power to control the foreign policies of the less powerful. Once again, the world having been reparceled as a result of barter and intrigue, it was proposed to seal the security of the new spoils by the organization of a military league, or at least a league backed by military force. As a result, quite in conformity with the previous league, new dangers have been engendered.

Alongside the attempts to set up coercive leagues, there has developed a policy of complete isolation, especially within the newly created States, following the war. The multiplication of boundaries, with the new customs regulations, has ended often in violations of the simplest economic laws. All of the troubles in Europe are man-made. Nature smiles there as beneficently as ever. The bankruptcy of the majority of European States is due to short-sighted economic behavior backed

by a shorter-sighted politics. The disposition on the part of each nation to grab for food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities, such as oil, not to mention the thirst for glory, has ended in worse than an economic stalemate. The attempt of each State to isolate itself, to constitute itself a sort of league to enforce peace, has ended in an European Donneybrook Fair. Naturally, this faith in the philosophy of isolation carries with it the insistence of each State to be judge in its own case. This makes any mutual consent or common policy impossible.

In the meantime there are reactions in every direction—up, down, sidewise—Tories overthrowing the government in England, the Fascisti staging a successful *coup d'état* in Italy, Ireland boiling in civil war, the Wirt Government falling in Germany, a government surviving suspended only by the slenderest thread in Austria, internal behavior severing all friendships formerly enjoyed by Russia, repudiation and financial collapse staring them all in the face.

The old-fashioned and poisonous remedies of leagues to enforce peace, of alliances, of balanced powers, of each for himself, have not only proved ineffective, they have poisoned the very life blood of Europe.

EUROPEANS FAIL TO UNDERSTAND

EUROPE, once again if we may speak of Europe as an entity, seems strangely uninformed in the basic things at the heart of any enduring peace between States.

She seems incapable, for example, of overcoming economically destructive forces with the healing forms of economic co-operation. When, in the early years of the 19th century, the many German principalities, each with its separate custom-house, were found to stand in the way of German commercial development, the practical organizing German mind met the situation by establishing in 1834 a customs union, familiarly known as the *Zollverein*, with the result that some seventeen German States, joined later by six others, developed their economic life by leaps and bounds. The *Zollverein* was not only the beginning of a successful German economic unity, it was the foundation of the German Empire. Europe seems to have no realizing sense of the importance of that lesson.

As we like to remind ourselves, the rather successful union of free, sovereign, independent States, familiarly known as the United States of America, represents in itself a balance between two opposing forces. One tendency with us is toward the freedom of the nation's parts, individualism—a philosophy which, if practiced